

**Opening Statement by the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers  
Responsible for Transport and Meteorology, Lilongwe, Malawi 3<sup>rd</sup> November  
2017**

- Honourable Minister responsible for Transport and Honourable Minister responsible for Meteorology for the Republic of Malawi;
- Honourable Ministers responsible for Transport and Meteorology from the SADC Region
- Your Excellencies, High Commissioners and Ambassadors
- Senior Officials from the SADC Member States;
- Representatives for Regional, Continental, International Organizations and our Implementing Agencies;
- Colleagues from the Media;
- Distinguished Delegates, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen
- All Protocol Observed;

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the meeting in the beautiful City of Lilongwe, in the Warm Heart of Africa, Malawi.

I welcome you to the meeting of Ministers of Transport of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

A special word of gratitude and appreciation is to His Excellency, the Minister of Transport of the host, the Republic of Malawi for the personal support you have provided to enable this meeting to take place. May we take the opportunity to renew our deep gratitude to Government of Malawi which offered and ably hosted this meeting of Ministers. We are inspired by the energy you and your team have displayed in the organization and hosting of this event.

Excellencies, we are gathering here to redouble our efforts to speed up integration and socio-economic development of our sub-region and by extension the entire continent. Transport is the enabler of integration and therefore what we achieve in transport has consequences for the success of the integration project in its entirety.

The sub-region and the continent is perceived well in developing new instruments, but regarded weak in implementing the existing treaties. We need to counter this perception by committing to prioritize implementation of existing agreements as opposed to developing new ones. In considering therefore, the work that our honourable officials have deliberated on in the past few days that they have been meeting, let us be guided by the desire to implement the agreements we have made in the past. In this way, we are likely to make meaningful progress.

With the creation of the Tripartite Free Trade Area now at an advanced stage, a precursor to our Continental Free Trade Area which is under development, as well as the adoption of the industrialization pillar both at SADC and Tripartite level, the role of efficient, reliable seamless, safe and cost effective transport services as well as meteorological services cannot be overemphasized. As the Committee of Ministers responsible for these sub-sectors established through the Protocol on Transport, Telecommunications and Meteorology, it is our responsibility to review the progress the Sub-Sectoral Committee reported to us annually by the Committee of Senior Officials. From the review, we should reaffirm our commitments and provide direction for implementation.

I understand the Tripartite Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme (TTTFP) that we approved in Livingstone, Zambia in 2015, was recently approved by COMESA Ministers for Infrastructure at their recent meeting in Lusaka, Zambia 3-4 October 2017. To complete the process, the inaugural meeting of Tripartite Ministers responsible for infrastructure endorsed the TTTFP and officially launched the programme on 26 October 2017 in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. EAC was the first Region to approve the TTTFP in 2016.

The TTTFP will assist all the continental countries of the Tripartite (COMESA, EAC and SADC). In addition, the Djibouti, Northern, Central, Dar es Salaam, Nacala, Beira, Maputo, North South and Lobito corridors which serve the 12 semi- or fully landlocked/land-linked countries amongst the 21 participating countries in the Tripartite region, have also been included.

I am advised that the purpose of TTTFP is to develop and implement harmonised road transport policies, laws, regulations and standards for efficient cross border road transport and transit networks, transport and logistics services, systems and procedures in the Tripartite region. I am reminded of the OR Tambo International Road Transport Indaba where I was invited to deliver the Keynote Address. The event was attended by representatives from inland SADC countries, and it brought together key stakeholders in the trade and transport value chains with a view to hold constructive deliberations on how to improve the cross-border transport system, intra-Africa trade and enhance industrialisation in Africa.

Excellencies, I am advised that Member States who attended the Indaba drafted the Linking Africa Plan which is aimed at providing interventions toward addressing trade and transport challenges, unlocking Africa's economic growth and development; improving regional competitiveness, enhancing intra-Africa trade and industrialisation in the continent. I therefore hope that in future, Officials from Member States will submit the final Plan to Ministers through the SADC Secretariat for us to appreciate the alignment of the recommendations with our regional initiatives.

Excellencies, I am told that on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017, the day before the start of the Oliver Tambo International Road Transport Indaba, we held and concluded a workshop on the establishment of the Multilateral Cross-Border Road Transport Agreement. Through the MCBRTA, for those who may not have opened their eyes to this strategic development, through the MCBRTA, we seek to march the region out of the binding limitations of bilateral road transport and trade agreements. Our strategic intent is to move towards the development of a more progressive, and strategic, multilateral agreement that will commit all of us to a common governance framework for entire SADC region. Our ultimate intent is to progressively move toward a common governance framework for the tripartite Free Trade Agreement, committing SADC, EAC and COMESA. It is our firm view that without the MCBRTA, we will not be able to achieve a common, consistent and reliable governance framework for the TFTA area. We therefore urge all the forward and progressive thinking countries to work together to make the realisation of the Multilateral Cross-Border Road Transport Association a reality. Our hope is that through this structure, we will ensure the

realisation of the objectives of harmonisation and systematic achievement of common objectives for all SADC, EAC and COMESA member-states.

According to the Programme for Infrastructure for Africa (PIDA) more needs to be done to improve railways operations so that at least 30% of Africa's international traffic is moved by rail. I am pleased to note that through the implementation of the Regional Railway Revitalization Initiative (RRI) Pilot Rail Study Project, the NEPAD Business Foundation commenced execution of the North South Corridor Study in February 2017. This programme is important because it will help us correct the current imbalance between roads and railway shares in regional freight. Currently roads carry 80% of regional traffic. This state of affairs is not sustainable financially, environmentally, socially and politically. We need to move rail friendly cargo away from road as the road trucks are accelerating the destruction of road infrastructure before the planned investment periods. Rail creates more employment and is environmentally friendly. We hope during this meeting we will share information and strategize on the development of a SADC railway revitalization strategy that will help us to industrialize.

Maritime transport is a key sub-sector with the ports playing a critical role in our transport corridors as well as integrating continental Africa to its islands. I am informed that the Tripartite COMESA- EAC-SADC together with IGAD and IOC through the coordination of IOC jointly prepared a programme on Enhancing Maritime Connectivity Project (EMCP) Support to Maritime Transport Sector in our Region.

It is essential that as a Tripartite we enhance the capacity of the Regional Economic Committees and Member States to coordinate regional maritime programmes. Our maritime sector cooperation is lagging behind. Excellencies, my government has just recently adopted its Comprehensive Maritime Transport Policy(CMTP)and one of the objectives of that policy is to promote coastal shipping services by vessels owned by the citizens of our sub-continent as means of facilitating intra-African trade. The CMTP as we now refer to it, is closely aligned with the revised African Maritime Transport Charter. There is no doubt that trade in services will result in increase in trade in commodities. In this context, we would wish to recommend that Minister's responsible for Maritime Affairs should meet with a view to promote the ratification of the Revised African Maritime Transport Charter.

I would also like to bring to your attention is the forthcoming Assembly of the International Maritime Organization taking place from 23 November to 6 December 2017. The IMO will among other matters on its agenda be electing new members to constitute the IMO Council for 2018-2019 biennium. I would like to express South Africa's deep gratitude to all your governments who have ensured through the support given to South Africa's candidature that SADC continues to be represented in the IMO Council. South Africa's candidature along that of Egypt, Kenya, Liberia and Morocco has been endorsed by the African Union's candidature Committee and endorsed by Heads of States. In this regard, my government wishes to request further support to South Africa's candidature for re-election to the IMO Council and to support all the other African Member states contesting the elections in order to ensure effective regional representation of the African continent at the IMO.

On the aviation front, one of the key issues we will be asked to decide on the need for adequate funding for SADC Aviation Safety Organisation (SASO). I cannot over emphasize the need for Member States to make their financial contributions pending the finalization of a sustainable funding model.

Furthermore, the signing of the Charter establishing SASO is of significance as it will formally institutionalize the SASO. The establishment of SASO is of importance as it will elevate and harmonize civil aviation matters within the SADC region.

It with great pleasure to also announce that our region has also shown interest in applying for a Secretary General position at the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC). I therefore, request Member States to rally behind our candidate at the AFCAC plenary session.

Excellencies, it is gives me pleasure to note the following achievements in the meteorology sector:

- the completion of the Institutional Support to African Climate Institution Project financed by African Development Bank;

- the completion of the Monitoring of the Environment for Security in Africa (MESA) Project in support of SADC region; and
- The number of Members States who are now ISO certified in terms of provision of aeronautical meteorological services increased.

While some considerable progress was made last year in the transport and meteorology sectors much more needs to be done to provide the seamless, efficient and cost-effective services. We will therefore during this meeting be reviewing recommendations by the Committee of Senior Officials and make decisions aimed at expediting the implementation of the sectors' program.

With these few words I wish you a successful meeting. Thank you for your attention.